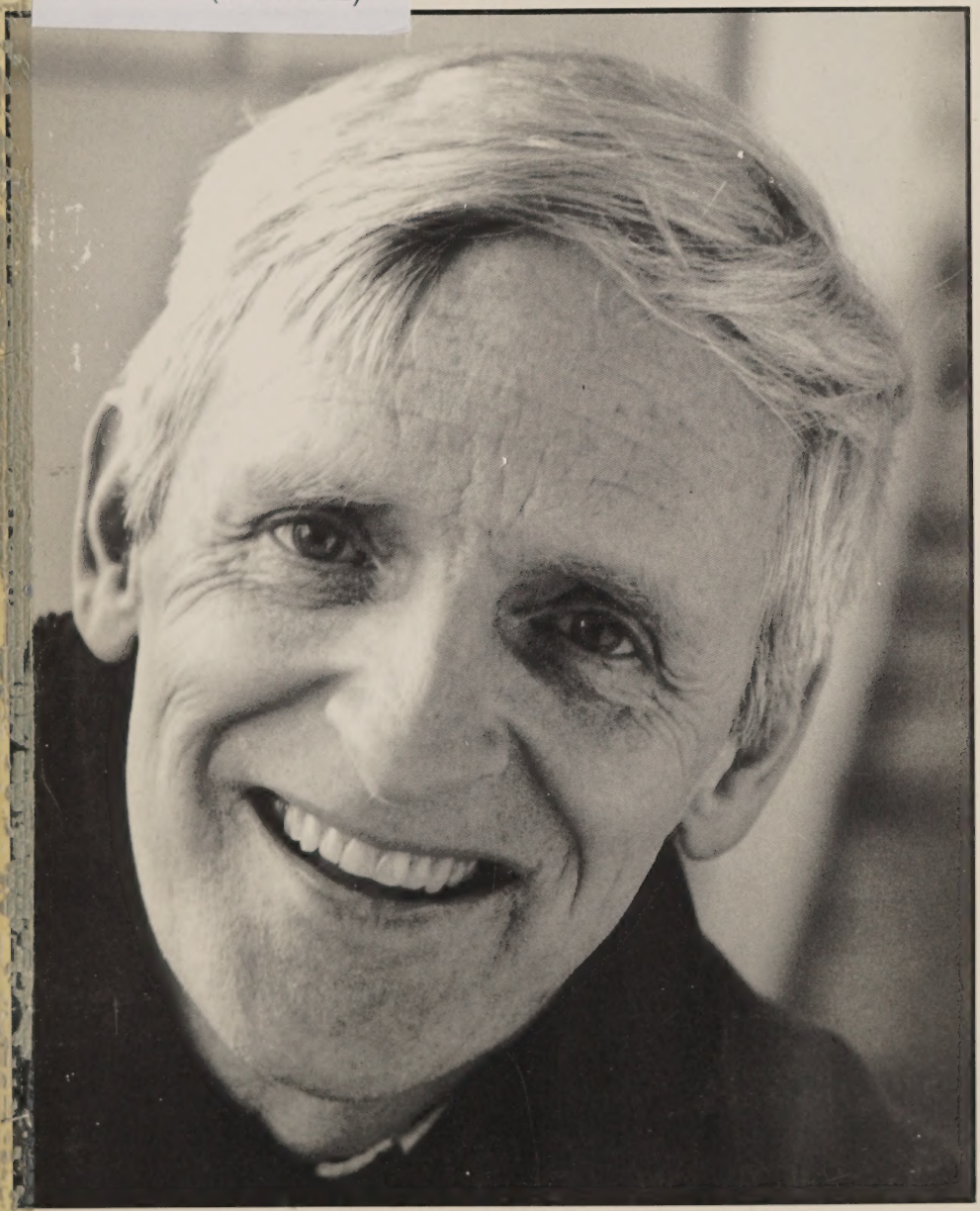
FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

v.43, no. 3 (Jun 1992)

$3.00 June, 1992



Since 1949 the purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

A Message from the President 2

From the Editor 4

Insights 5

The Coming Spiritual Renaissance: An Interview with Matthew Fox, *by Paul Walsh* 6

"A Transforming Experience": The Oceanic Sound, *by William M. Stephens* 10

Prayers 16

Rock Ritual VI, *by Robert O'Rourke* 17

To See the Divine in All Things, *by Gulshan Khakee* 20

Poetry 25

Spirituality and Everyday Life: Eight Steps to Take While Waiting, *by Samuel Arrell* 26

Global Image—Global Space, *by Paqui Nelson* 30

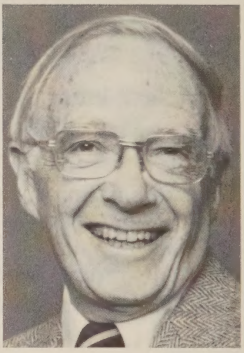
Ask Angela, *by Barbara Ackerman* 33

The Human Quest, *by Swami Saraswati* 37

Books We Have Enjoyed 46

Letters to the Editor 47

Cover Photograph of Matthew Fox by Mari Kane



The first week in March, editor Mary Ford-Grabowsky and I, joined by my wife, Anne, a Jungian analyst, spent a week in the San Francisco Bay area with Fellowship in Prayer's northern California representative, Sheila Holtgrieve.

We hoped to learn at first hand, from a broad spectrum of men and women, about their spiritual needs and concerns in these rapidly changing, often chaotic times. We met and talked with spiritual leaders and "ordinary people." We visited ashrams, meditation centers, and retreat houses. We asked our questions at interfaith councils from Marin county to Berkeley and east to San Ramon. We talked with new found friends in San Francisco's Grace Cathedral and with *Fellowship in Prayer* readers from all over the area in Jack and Kathy Maloney's home in Los Altos. What did we learn?

A powerful and growing spiritual renaissance is under way. If we limit our understanding of what's going on to the newspapers and television, there are deep grounds for pessimism. Our native idealism, our sensitivity to the suffering of others, and our sense of unity with all the life around us seem to have been submerged in a sea of addiction to money, power, possessions and pleasure. Gandhi described the twentieth century as characterized by knowledge without character, science without humanity, commerce without morality, wealth without work, politics without principles, pleasure without conscience, and worship without self-sacrifice.

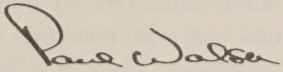
Yet, when we talked with such well known spiritual teachers as Father Matthew Fox and the revered Hindu sage and meditation master, Eknath Easwaran, they told us a different story. In their experience (their lectures, workshops and retreats attract thousands of women and men every year, and their books and tapes have inspired hundreds of thousands more), increasing numbers of thoughtful and caring people are searching for and rediscovering the innate wisdom, love, and compassion that are the basic building blocks of our true nature. Women and men of every age, class and condition are using prayer and meditation to tap into that deep heart center that is the true home of our humanity

and, yes, our divinity. They are using the tremendous spiritual energy released in the process of prayer and meditation to renew their own lives and to work to bequeath to their children and grandchildren a more peaceful, just and healthy world.

"Ordinary people" will lead the way. The changes needed to renew ourselves, our society, and our world are unlikely to come from the top, from business or government leaders with primary commitments to profits, power, and the status quo. They are part of the problem, not the solution. The transformation of our culture's current distorted values into their opposites must take place within the individual heart and soul if the spiritual renaissance foreseen by Matt Fox and Eknath Easwaran is to take place. Difficult as that may sound, it is a challenge that can be met. As Gandhi demonstrated in his own long life, the power of even a single individual, committed to truth, justice, and compassion, can change the world for the better. Day by day, the way we think and the way we act, our prayers and our example, can shift the world balance from destruction and death to health and sanity.

The interfaith movement and the growth of small, non-hierarchical groups meeting for prayer and meditation will play a crucial role in the coming spiritual renaissance. Again and again we were told that the interfaith understanding that we are all one family—all God's children—is essential to our survival and our salvation and that this truth is often best brought to life in small neighborhood prayer/meditation and spiritual support groups.

In community we nourish and gain strength and courage from the spiritual values and aspirations that unite us all. We transcend our differences as we share each other's pain and joy. As we pray together, the inner divinity at the core of our being comes alive, and once again it seems possible that all will be well.



Paul Walsh

I want to recommend to you an important new book, *The Feminine Face of God: the Unfolding of the Sacred in Women* (Bantam Books, NYC), by Sherry Ruth Anderson and Patricia Hopkins. The authors traveled thousands of miles across the continent to interview women who are known as sources of spiritual knowledge and inspiration. Exploring in depth the life stories of women as different as a Chumash indian, a rabbi, and a Vedanta nun, they heard fascinating anecdotes about childhood, leaving home, sexuality—"a wildcard constantly cracking open my heart"—and "being the sacred garden."

My favorite anecdote comes from Twylah Nitsch, a Seneca elder who said she first encountered the divine at about the age of five. It happened one summer when she decided to dig a hole in a large bank of earth near her home that would be big enough to sit in, like a cave. Since she only had a spoon to dig with, it took her the whole summer.

> When I had finally made the hole deep enough to sit in I would crawl in there and listen. I could hear the earth talking. I could hear the worms and the insects and other living sounds. They were my friends. And so were the stones. I had a little apron and I would gather the stones up in it, take them to my grandfather, and drop them on the ground in front of him. My grandfather was a medicine man and he would read them for me. The stones spoke to me. They still do. That summer was one of my first experiences of connecting with the sacred, and I remember it very well.

Charming stories like this punctuate almost every page of *The Feminine Face of God* and make it unforgettable.

Nevertheless—a word of caution to people who take religion seriously. The book is not about "the feminine face of God": it is about "the feminine." Anderson and Hopkins have made a much-needed contribution towards a record of women's experience but in the process they confuse God with humanity and reduce spirituality to feelings and self-development. There is a wealth of material here that can help in the ongoing quest to answer such questions as, "What are women like?" and "What do women want?" but nothing is added to our knowledge of God.

Mary Ford-Grabowsky

Courage is not the towering oak that sees storms come and go. It is the fragile blossom that opens in the snow.

Alice Mackenzie Swaim

You, O God, are the kingdom of heaven; You the land promised to the gentle; You the grazing-lands of paradise; You the hall of the celestial banquet; You the ineffable marriage-chamber; You the table set for all; You the bread of life; You the unheard-of drink; You both the urn for the water and the life-giving water; You moreover the inextinguishable lamp for each of the saints; You the garment and the crown and the One who distributes the crowns; You the joy and the rest; You the delight and the glory; You the gaiety and the mirth; and Your grace, grace of the Spirit of all sanctity, will shine like the sun in all; and You, inaccessible sun, will shine in our midst, and all will shine brightly to the degree of their faith, their hope, and their love, their purification, and their illumination by Your spirit.

St. Symeon the New Theologian

I did not ask for success, I asked for wonder. And You gave it to me.

Abraham Joshua Heschel

There is a light that shines beyond all things on earth, beyond us all, beyond the heavens, beyond the highest, the very highest heavens. This is the light that shines in our hearts.

Chandogya Upanishad

The Perfect Way is difficult only for those who choose. Do not like; do not dislike. All will then be clear. If you want truth to stand clear before you, never be for or against. The struggle between "like" and "dislike" is the mind's worst disease.

Buddhist Wisdom

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love
For love would be love of the wrong thing, there is yet faith
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.

T. S. Eliot

Here am I! Send me.

Is. 6.8

The Coming Spiritual Renaissance: An Interview with Matthew Fox

PAUL WALSH

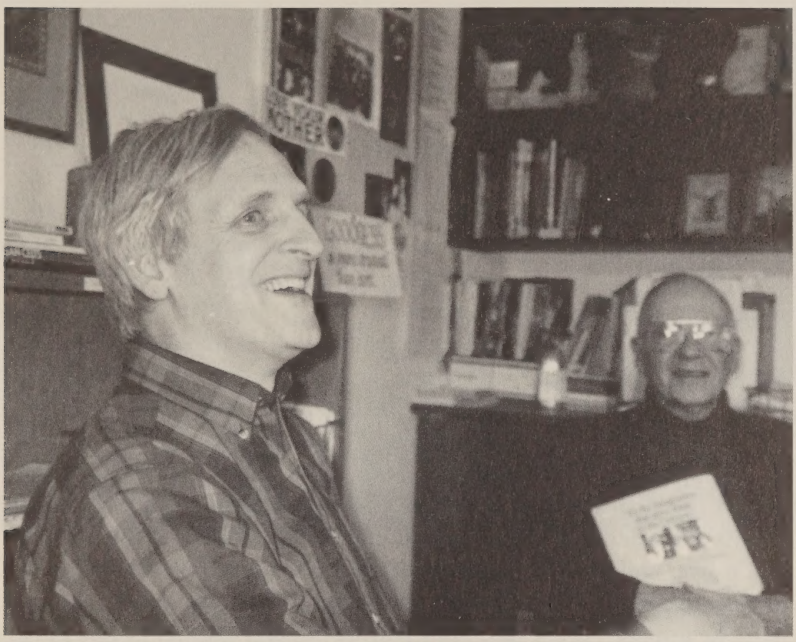
On March 3rd, Fellowship in Prayer interviewed Matthew Fox in his small, book-laden office on the campus of Holy Names College in Oakland, California, where he is the founder and director of the Institute in Culture and Creation Spirituality and editor-in-chief of its influential magazine, Creation Spirituality. *The following article is based on that interview and on Fox's books, especially* The Cosmic Christ *and* Creation Spirituality.

Passionate and provocative, Matt Fox, a tall, slim, broad-shouldered man in his early fifties, dazzles his listeners with the encyclopedic knowledge he brings to bear on his wide range of interests: spirituality, theology, feminism, mysticism, deep ecology, the arts (especially music and dance), poetry, science (physics and biology in particular), and deep ecumenism. His answers to our questions make it clear why he is widely regarded as one of the most challenging, creative, and prophetic voices of our times.

We asked Fox what, exactly, he means by Creation Spirituality. Western Christianity, he answered, presents us with a choice between two very different versions of God's intentions for us. The one most of us are all-too-familiar with is the Fall-Redemption model. It teaches us that by nature we are sinful and alienated from God, each other, and the rest of creation. Its legacy is too often guilt, fear, isolation, and self-hatred—projected onto the "other" in all its forms.

The earlier, creation-based spirituality—which is at the core of all the world's religions—affirms the original goodness of our natures, created in the image of God. It celebrates original blessing, rather than original sin. (Sin, in Fox's book, is a turning away from creation and its author, the divine one who dwells in all things.)

Creation spirituality, Fox told us, unleashes our vitality, creativity, playfulness. It sees us all as one: men and women, black and white, young and old, heterosexual and gay, Christian and non-Christian, "us" and "them." Creation spirituality, seeing each of us as a living image of divinity, leads us into green pastures where we no longer need to dominate, control and destroy each other and the very planet we live on. It is the path that can lead us to a just, peaceful world, restored to ecological health and its original harmony.



Fr. Matthew Fox with FiP President Paul Walsh

As a movement, Creation Spirituality forms a kind of sacred circle made up of men and women whose passions have been touched by the issues of our day—deep ecologists, ecumenists, native peoples, justice activists, feminists, gay and lesbian peoples, scientists seeking to reconnect science and wisdom, people of prophetic faith traditions, artists seeking to express the spirituality of the body through music and dance—all these and many other groups find in the Creation Spirituality movement a common harmony and a common ground on which to dance.

Creation Spirituality is not just about Christianity, Fox told us. It includes all faith traditions. Pointing out that his faculty at the Institute for Culture and Creation Spirituality includes a Jewish Sufi, a Zen master, a Lakota medicine man, a Yoruba priestess and a Wiccan, he makes the point that our salvation lies in a global, spiritual renaissance—an interfaith movement that will learn from, and put into practice, the spiritual wisdom of *all* the world's religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and

Judaism, Taoism and Shintoism, Christianity in all its forms, and native religions throughout the world. Emphasizing the fundamental unity and shared spiritual and ethical values of all religious traditions can bring the whole world together in community and common purpose, Fox noted, while at the same time strengthening everyone's ties to her or his own practice or tradition.

This unleashing of the spiritual wisdom at the heart of all religions holds the last, best hope for the survival of life on our planet. There is no such thing as a Lutheran sun, a Buddhist moon, a Jewish ocean or a Roman Catholic forest, he points out.

When humanity comes to understand the ultimate unity of everyone and everything in creation, Fox said, we will have found the way out of our anthropocentric dilemma that is boring our young, killing our souls, trivializing our worship and destroying the planet.

The killing of Mother Earth is the number one ethical, spiritual, and human issue of our time. The devastation of our planet—its ozone layer and its tropical rain forests; the polluting and poisoning of our air, soil, and water; and the extinguishing of countless species of wildlife go on unabated, and largely ignored by our leaders.

Eight hundred years ago, Hildegard of Bingen warned us not to rip apart the "web of the universe" in our dealings with nature. She wrote:

> The earth should not be injured. The earth should not be destroyed. As often as the elements of the world are violated by ill treatment, so God will cleanse them. God will cleanse them through the sufferings, through the hardships of humankind. All of creation God gives to humankind to use. But if this privilege is misused, God's justice permits creation to punish humanity.

Until we understand and reverence the truth of that wisdom, all the technology and legislation and economic policy in the world will not bring about the needed changes. Change must come from within each of us, as individuals. We must first purify and restore our inner environment through prayer and meditation. Otherwise we will not have the spiritual understanding, or will, needed to change our life style in ways that can restore the health of Mother Earth.

Part of Fellowship in Prayer's mission is to encourage and support the formation of small prayer groups. We asked Fox if these are an important factor in the spiritual renaissance he envisions.

Absolutely, he answered. In South American Christianity, the work of justice, liberation, and spirituality is carried on in what are called "base

Mari Kane

communities": groups of men and women who gather together in each other's homes to tell their stories. The rebirth of a living religion that can bring about the essential change in relationships between "us" and "them," and between humanity and the rest of creation, will emerge from small groups in which we realize that instead of being isolated and in constant competition, we are all interconnected and interdependent. That change will not come from the hierarchy; from the top down. It will come from us, from the bottom up.

In North America, Fox observed, people are turning to prayer and meditation groups, and the rapidly expanding 12-step groups, in order to reawaken their spirituality. In these groups, people gather and tell their stories. In the telling of one's story, Fox says, there is always an experience of the sacred. Everyone's story is sacred and everyone has a story. And in everyone's story there is deep grief and deep joy. Most important, he added, in stories told in complete honesty and letting-go, there is always deep healing. Acceptance, affirmation, non-judgmental listening, unconditional love. Those are the blessings people are looking for, and finding, in small spiritual groups. They are at the heart of Matt Fox's Creation Spirituality.

The Oceanic Sound

WILLIAM M. STEPHENS

This favorite FiP *author was literally "changed overnight" by a spiritual experience of overwhelming power and warmth.*

Please send the story of your own "transforming experience" to The Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08542.

We are all so busy living our lives that we seldom appreciate the importance of events and conditions that may be vital to our future development; that may, in fact, actually transform our lives. During World War II, as a young Marine, I waited out the war on a tiny coral atoll in the Central Pacific. At the time I thought it was a wasted year. Now I think it was a key factor in my spiritual growth.

Johnston Island, in 1942, was essentially a barren airstrip one mile long and a quarter-mile wide. Dugouts and gun emplacements lined the rocky shore. The island had no trees, no grass and no humans except Marines and Navy Seabees (construction crews), all male. We lived amidst thousands of seabirds surrounded by a coral lagoon teeming with colorful sea life. The lagoon was encircled by a barrier reef, and the rumble of the surf assaulting that wall of coral was a constant din. The noise level varied with the wind and sea conditions, and it continuously changed; now rising in intensity and pitch, and now subsiding. Sometimes like the booming of distant cannons, and sometimes as soft as a whisper.

William M. Stephens, a Tennessee attorney and writer, is currently writing a book, The Path Through the Heart, *about great lovers of God of many backgrounds and religious orientations who have sought and found their Divine Beloved within their own hearts.*

After a few weeks on the island, I grew so accustomed to the roar of the sea that I hardly noticed it. But later, after a year on "the Rock," as we called it, I was transferred to the Marine Barracks at Pearl Harbor, and I found myself missing that constant surf sound. It had become a friend to my senses, a companion to my psyche.

Many years passed before I fully realized how much a part of me that oceanic sound had become. In 1969, I had reached a point of crisis in my life. I was despondent and suicidal. I had lost all faith in humankind, in religion, in the political process, and I was even skeptical of the reality of beauty, truth, God, or my own soul. Wasn't everything relative, as Einstein said? Were we born only to suffer and die?

When I reached my lowest ebb, I went through a dream-like experience that ran the gamut from horror, hopelessness and death to indescribable bliss. In the beginning of the experience, I found myself dying, slowly and relentlessly. There was no way I could stop it, and my emotions ran the scale between paralyzing fear and total resistance to complete and utter resignation. Gradually, inexorably, the beating of my heart slowed down, and finally stopped. I was dead, I knew it, but to my astonishment, I was still conscious! My *mind* at least still existed, somehow and somewhere! I seemed to be adrift in a black void, with no reference points. Floating in nothingness, hopeless and helpless.

Finally, I spotted the glimmer of light at the end of what seemed to be a long tunnel. Suddenly I was hurtling through space, approaching the light. And then an explosion, like a sunburst, and I was bathed in wonderful warm radiance. Tremendous energy and power surged through my being, and in and out of the trees, rocks and earth. Everything was alive and breathing, and everything flowed into everything! And at the same time, I heard and felt a vibrant humming sound, like the hum of a great dynamo sustaining all life and creation.

When I returned to my normal consciousness, I exclaimed, aloud, "Nobody ever dies! Nobody ever dies!" From that moment on I knew beyond question that God is at the heart of everything and every person. Each of us, each stone and each galaxy reflects God's glory, and each beating heart keeps time to God's music.

As I relived the experience, time after time, in order to bring back the sweet warmth that filled my heart in remembering, it seemed that the humming sound was particularly meaningful. It was reminiscent of the roaring surf sounds that had permeated my consciousness during that

Brooks Walsh

year on Johnston Island, but *this* sound was richer, more vibrant, and more penetrating. It was, I believe, a shadow of a shadow of the mystical *Om* (or *Aum*) sound that is said to underlie all creation. The ancient Hindus and Buddhists refer to the "*Om* sound" as the Original Word of

To learn to love God more, we need to think of God more.

God. It is chanted and sung by seekers of many sects and faiths throughout the world, and, in fact, the Christian "Amen" is said to be a variation of *Om*. Everywhere, in fact, mantras, hymns, and prayers utilize the "*Om* sound" and other vowel sounds, which are said to stimulate the psychic centers (or *chakras*), allowing an inflow of spiritual energy.

The practical effect of my experience was a re-focusing of my aims and goals. From that time onward, I have believed that the aim of life is to love God, and the goal of life is to become One with God, as Meher Baba has said. To learn to love God more, we need to think of God more. By thinking of God more, we increase our awareness of the Divine presence and guidance in our daily tasks. Every day I try to give all my thoughts, words and deeds to my Beloved. If I do that honestly and without reservation, God guides me in each step I take and opens every door.

About 23 years have passed since I changed, overnight, from an agnostic to a seeker. Those years have been busy, productive and happy, and I have only rarely even thought about Johnston Island. But then, not long ago, we moved to a house in a lovely, forested section of Nashville, Tennessee. Only one thing bothered me about the new location—the proximity of an interstate highway. It was only a quarter-mile away, not near enough to see, but near enough to *hear* when the wind was right. To me, that was *too* close. After a hard day at the office, I craved natural sounds and natural surroundings, with no reminders of heavy traffic and pollution.

One evening, shortly after we made the move, I sat on the patio to watch the full moon rising over the hills. But to my disgust, the wind was blowing off I-65, and the drone of traffic was too loud to ignore. As I sat there irritated by the intrusion of technology into my peaceful mood, a strange thing happened. My mind flashed back to an evening in 1942, when I sat in a machine gun pit beside a turquoise lagoon, leaning

my back against a pile of sandbags, watching the full moon rise over the surf, which hammered and boiled across the coral reef.

And now in Nashville, nearly 50 years later, goosebumps rose on my flesh. The sound of the interstate highway, with its rising and falling sounds, its rumbling and groaning, was very much like the sound of surf striking a coral reef!

That was a wonderful discovery for me. I started paying more attention to everyday sounds. And now I hear that oceanic hum in the drone of an air conditioner; the rumble of high-flying jets; the din of a waterfall; the rustle of leaves; the howl of the wind; in the ambient hum of crowded restaurants, lecture halls, and teeming city streets.

It's all around us and within us, and it's like the whisper of God's voice saying, "I am here, always with you. Listen . . . listen . . . listen."

The Way of Prayer

We have received so many requests for our new booklet *The Way of Prayer*, that we are going to a second printing. We are delighted with the response.

The eight-page booklet, with its sections on "Forms of Prayer," "Attitude Toward Prayer," "The Practice of Prayer," how to organize prayer groups, and "Suggested Readings," clearly answers a deeply felt need. If you'd like a free copy, please send your request and a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542-3227.

If you wish more than one copy, however, we ask that you help us cover printing and mailing costs by contributing $2 for each ***additional*** copy you request.

Come, My Light

Come, my Light, and illumine my darkness.
Come, my Life, and revive me from death.
Come, my Physician, and heal my wounds.
Come, Flame of divine love, and burn up the thorns of my misdeeds, kindling my heart with the flame of Your love.
Come, my God, sit upon the throne of my heart and reign there.
For You alone are my God and my Lord.

St. Dimitrii of Rostov, 17th century

O Great Spirit, Hear Us

O our Father, the Sky, hear us
and make us strong.
O our Mother the Earth, hear us
and give us support.
O Spirit of the East,
send us your Wisdom.
O Spirit of the South,
may we tread your path of life.
O Spirit of the West,
may we always be ready for the long journey.
O Spirit of the North, purify us
with your cleansing winds

Sioux Prayer

Blessed Are You

Blessed are You, Lord our God, king of the universe. By Your word You bring on the evening twilight; in wisdom You open the gates of dawn, and with foresight make time pass and seasons change. You set the stars in their courses in the sky according to your plan. You create day and night, turning light into darkness and darkness into light. You make the day fade away and bring on the night, and separate day and night, for you are the Lord of hosts of heaven. Blessed are You, Lord, who brings on the evening twilight.

Traditional Jewish Prayer

Rock Ritual VI

ROBERT O'ROURKE

Without the animals, Chief Seattle wrote, "men and women would die from great loneliness of spirit." Bob O'Rourke has created a sacred circle of animal fetishes as a reminder to cherish and protect God's 4 legged creatures as well as all being on our endangered planet.

Through the years the Zuni Indians of southwest New Mexico have developed a reputation for their skill in sculpting stone fetishes. Their hand-carved objects represent both the form and spirit of an animal as well as the powerful forces of nature. The mountain lion, bear, wolf and eagle are but a few of the animals represented in their work. These crafted pieces are placed on the family altar or in special bowls as testimony to the Zuni's respect and reverence for animals and their blessed place in the natural world. Indeed, all Indians of long ago looked upon animals as brothers and sisters and treated them with kindness. They named their clans for animals: the snake, badger, bear. When it was necessary for the tribe's survival, selected warriors went on the hunt but never failed to give thanks for the animals who had given their lives.

Several Zuni Fetishes have a distinctive place in our home. Because of their presence I have created my own ritual for animals—not according to Zuni tradition because I do not pretend to understand the depth and mystery of their religion—but in the spirit of people everywhere who believe animals and all life is sacred. To those who believe love for God is closely associated with a love for all creation: ants, trees, cats, people!

Might one measure of our love for God be gauged by the love we extend to these so-called "lower" or "lesser" creatures? Through them might we catch an ever-so-small, tentative glimpse of what God is? A minuscule dimension of the Great Spirit? Could it be imagined that one of the smallest of insects, the ant, could afford us an opportunity to contemplate the nature of God?

Before the white man invaded the west the Indian had no bible. No

A writer and poet who lives in Colorado Springs, CO, Bob O'Rourke also sculpts Santos, *statues of the saints most revered by the people of New Mexico and the southwest.*

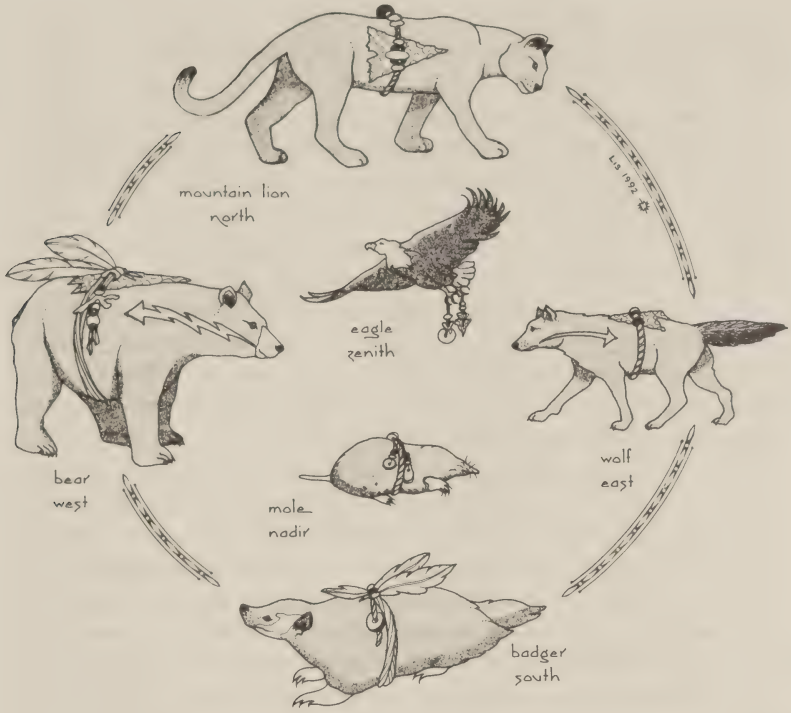
Lisa A. Smith, whose illustration accompanies this article, is a Colorado artist and creator of "Spirit Stone" fetishes.

bound volume with chapters and verses—only trees, mountains, birds and creatures of varied uniqueness. These people would have understood and appreciated the notions of Bernard of Clairvaux, "I find God more in trees and brooks than in books!" I believe as each of us become more aware of what-is-left of our natural world we become more conscious of creation and revere and love each small part of the whole. We develop a deep sensitivity and alarm as bulldozers rip open the mountains, chain saws clear-cut the forests, tankers spill oil across the seas . . . thoughtless acts of destruction of habitat for both humankind and animals. The Native American believes our Mother Earth is hurt, crying out for mercy. Animals like the spotted owl, dolphin and harbor seal are also helpless and without voices. Over a century ago Chief Seattle anticipated such devastation when he posed the question, "What is humanity without the beasts?" His answer, "Men and women would die from great loneliness of spirit."

My own circle of fetishes: prairie dog, mountain lion, bear, eagle and frog remind me to pray and then act within my personal-life-sphere to help Mother Earth by planting a flower, feeding the birds, protecting a butterfly, adopting an abandoned dog. The passionate words of Albert Schweitzer guide my thoughts:

> Hear our humble prayer, O God, for our friends the animals, especially for animals who are suffering; for any that are hunted or lost, or deserted or frightened or hungry; for all that must be put to death. We entreat for them all thy mercy and pity, and for those who deal with them we ask a heart of compassion and gentle hands and kindly words. Make us, ourselves, to be true friends to animals and so to share the blessings of the merciful.

Might this become your prayer also, prompting you to befriend animals and to speak always for their welfare and safety?



Guardian Fetishes of the Six Directions

To See the Divine in All Things

GULSHAN KHAKEE

Here is wisdom for daily living from a disciple of one of the great spiritual teachers of the 20th century, Swami Muktananda, who brought the meditation tradition of Kashmir Shaivism to the west.

To "see God in each other" (*paraspara devo bhavah*) was the constant teaching of a great contemporary meditation master, Swami Muktananda. One may as well extend this to say "see God in all creation," because when someone asked Swami Muktananda, "Do you see God in the tree?" he replied, "No, but I see the tree as God." Indeed he taught that everything in the universe including ourselves is composed of the same divine *Shakti* or energy.

This is a fundamentally spiritual view of the universe. It lends to the cosmos a sacred character. By sacred we do not mean something to be set aside for worship. By sacred we mean something that impresses us as deeper than thought. To say that the cosmos—the earth, the trees, the air around us—is sacred means that it is worthy of our respect and our consideration as a living entity. It means that the cosmos is not a dead object at our disposal to be selfishly exploited or wantonly plundered without deep thought. If we continue to exploit the universe irresponsibly and thoughtlessly—and the pace of such exploitation has been accelerating in this past century—then it is as if we are destroying ourselves, dooming ourselves.

Muktananda based his teachings to "see the divine in all things" on the philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism. The philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism is monistic. Unlike the Judeo-Christian-Islamic monotheistic world view, which sees God as the Creator and Judge apart from creation, Kashmir Shaivism proposes that the divine *Shakti*—energy—of Siva or God pervades the entire universe.

This *Shakti* is the dynamic aspect of Siva or the Ultimate Reality. The

Gulshan Khakee studied at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, then did a doctorate in Religion at Harvard University. She is the author of Contemplative Disciplines in Sufism *and many other publications.*

For more information about the teachings of Swami Muktananda and Gurumayi, who inherited his lineage at his death in 1982, write to the Syda Foundation, Box 600, South Fallsburg, NY 12779, (914) 434-2000.

Shakti created the universe out of her own being, hence this dynamic power or energy is immanent within the universe. It is not like a carpenter building, let us say, a desk or chair out of materials apart from himself. The *Shakti* or divine energy of God created the entire creation out of her own being. Everything in the universe, including ourselves, is composed of the same divine *Shakti*.

In the East, philosophy is not a mental arm-chair exercise: it is something to be lived, something to be experienced, a goal to work towards. It is not sufficient to know through a mental construct that the divine *Shakti* pervades the entire universe: one has to know this by direct personal experience.

The problem is how one can have the direct experience of this truth that the entire universe is pervaded by one divine energy. To have this direct experience our consciousness has to expand. Not by imagination merely, for that is a mental state also. But by turning within, through meditation.

The science of meditation did not die with the ancient sages; it is alive. Thousands of people, both easterners and westerners, have taken to meditation, and they report certain experiences. These experiences belong to a sphere that is far more subtle than the one we are accustomed to dealing with. We cannot verify them with our scientific instruments, which deal with gross matter. They are not concrete, like facts.

In the East, philosophy is not a mental arm-chair exercise: it is something to be lived, something to be experienced, a goal to work towards.

Among the experiences reported are feelings of well-being, lightness and joy. One also comes across reports of experiences of expanded consciousness. For example, Rod Anderson, a former actor and opera director from Australia described such a state as follows:

> I awoke in an ecstatic state, literally drunk and staggering from all the happiness inside. I went to take a shower, and as I stood in the spraying water I suddenly lost track of my limits. I looked at the shower and knew that I was the water coming out of it. I was the water hitting my body as well as the body it was hitting. I was the water running down the tile walls, and the walls were also I. And the most ecstatic part of it all was that I was

the water running down into the drain. I stayed in the shower for hours, and when I came out everything I saw sparkled; nothing had hard edges anymore. When I tried to eat, I could put the food in my mouth, but I could not chew because I was the food.

The above experience illustrates that the basis of all creation, including ourselves, is a single unified conscious energy which is capable of knowing itself because it is conscious. There is no diversity, no duality here, only oneness. The diversity we see and experience in the phenomenal world (the world of names and forms) is merely apparent; it is only a limited way of experiencing things. Through meditation one discerns the only, one, conscious energy or *Shakti* beyond the apparent diversity.

Meditating under the guidance of Swami Muktananda I had a similar experience. Muktananda always said, "See God in each other." I heard this constantly from him; actually I had heard it even before I came to him. But the teaching had remained just a mental concept to me, never a reality. Then one day, in South Fallsburg, New York, Swami Muktananda called me to his study, and talked about various things. Then he said, "Now you can go." I started to leave, and as I was leaving, a thought occurred to me. So I said to him that I would like to spend more time meditating. Muktananda replied, "Yes, yes, you can meditate for a few minutes in the morning, or a few minutes at night." Then he looked me full in the face and said, "But see Siva in everybody." I muttered, "*Ji Babaji*" (yes), and left.

But I kept on thinking—how can I see God in all these people? Tom is so nasty, Jane does not listen to me when I ask her to hurry up in the shower; they are horrible people. Where is God in them? At the same time I prayed inwardly for help. Then came October 2, 1982. I was in London, England, on my way to Ganeshpuri in India. It was a grey, drizzly Saturday afternoon, so I thought I should get some shopping done. I went out and had something to eat, and then headed towards Oxford Circle. And then the most amazing thing happened. Suddenly my whole sense of perception changed. I could see bluish light all around. There were a lot of people in the tube train, on the streets and in the shops. But I had the sense that they were all a part of me! If anyone pushed or jostled me, I could not feel any anger or irritation, as I normally would. The same thing with all those people—though I had never seen any of them before, and would never see them again—they were all a part of me, and I of them. This state of awareness lasted for a few hours.

Brooks Walsh

One cannot live in that state of consciousness all the time, but once having experienced it, one realizes what the truth beyond the physical reality of sense perception is. One's whole outlook towards one's fellow human beings, towards animals, trees and rivers—towards all creation—alters. An inner transformation in one's attitude gradually comes about. In this new state of awareness there is no question of how to get the most for oneself, no matter what the cost to others, or what the cost to the earth. Everything is one.

In Indian mythology the Earth is deified; she is the Divine Mother supporting and nurturing one and all without any selfish motive. For millennia, Indian sages and yogis have told us that the earth and everything on it and around it, including ourselves, are the pulsation of the same divine *Shakti*. More recently quantum physics, which deals with subatomic particles, is coming to a similar view of the world. Modern subatomic physics reveals that what we hitherto viewed as solid matter, including ourselves, is not solid at all. And there are no empty spaces either. Even in the most solid looking mass, as well as in empty looking spaces, subatomic particles are constantly in motion, breaking off and creating ever-new formations. These particles are not static; they are dynamic; they are energy. But while the modern physicist experiments with

external, material phenomena, the Indian yogis and meditation masters have viewed this play of the constant dynamic energy on the inside, through inner awareness and meditation.

Meditation is not the prerogative of the ancients, or of the yogis sitting in caves in the Himalayas—it is the right of all of us. The state of meditation exists in all of us, just the same as the state of wakefulness or the sleep state. Only by realizing this through awareness can we save the precious earth, and ultimately that implies saving ourselves.

Apologies to Emma S. McLaughlin for the error in her poem, "Exultant Hymn of Praise" (*Vol. 44, No. 2*). The ninth line should have begun, "Bow down with me."

It's possible I am pushing through solid rock
in flintlike layers, as the ore lies, alone;
I am such a long way in I see no way through,
and no space: everything is close to my face,
and everything close to my face is stone.

I don't have much knowledge yet in grief—
so this massive darkness makes me small.
You be the master: make Yourself fierce, break in:
then Your great transforming will happen to me,
and my great grief cry will happen to You.

Rainer Maria Rilke

The Winged Lion

The winged lion appears
from the clouds of morning
to lie down beside me
lobelia, lilies, blessed thistle
and the sweet grasses of the sun.

The winged lion appears
from the clouds of noon
to lie down beside me
haze of golden yellow bees
and the sky in its infancy.

The winged lion appears
from the clouds of night
to lie down beside me
my heartbeats are pearls
strung on the softest thread.

June Moreau

Eight Steps to Take While Waiting

SAMUEL ARRELL

When "things hit their absolute low point," this writer learned how to wait with hope.

We all suffer from tunnel vision. The things that surround us, those we like, those we dislike, or those we are totally indifferent to can almost blind us. Somehow a slow, sly and sneaky process, a process which we are usually not aware of, catches us off-guard. When the awareness of how we have been blinded finally gets our attention, the results can facilitate tremendous growth, resulting in a changed person, one changed "from the inside out."

I had just such an experience. In 1988, I became a candidate for the Society of the Divine Savior. I found the transition to be quite stressful. It required me to move to Milwaukee from my home of 25 years, Denver, Colorado. It required me to leave my friends, my family, my local parish community, and a job which I truly enjoyed.

The transition did not go well at first. I was required to work during my candidature and support myself. Living with other people proved to be quite a challenge as well, as I had lived by myself in a number of settings for the previous 10 years. I had to take employment which was less than suitable and really had to scrape to make ends meet.

Five months after moving, things hit their absolute low point. I developed some serious foot problems as the result of a congenital birth defect. Illness kept me away from work. As a result, money was even

A journalist with a background in newspaper reporting, Samuel Arrell is a member of the Salvatorian Community in Milwaukee, WI.

tighter. I was under pressure from my boss to quit as a result of the many absences. I also was seriously doubting my vocation in my community.

One day I had simply had enough. Wondering why I was putting myself through all of this, I sat in a chair and shook a clenched fist towards heaven and demanded an answer to all these problems. I was bound and determined that the answer would come then and there. The answer did not come, and I eventually ended up falling asleep in the chair.

The next morning, I woke up even angrier. Thinking that prayer might help matters and put me in a better frame of mind, I decided to go to mass. There was at least a chance that the problems which weighted me down might be resolved.

The reading that morning was from the gospel of Mark, where the Pharisees were challenging Jesus to prove he was the Son of God by giving them a sign. Jesus' reply was "Why does this generation demand a sign? In truth I tell you, no sign shall be given this generation."

For someone who felt abandoned by God, those were not the most comforting words to hear. They seemed to be anything but the answer to the clenched-fist prayers I had been praying the night before.

Cliff Moore

Feeling quite disappointed, I nevertheless left the chapel that morning with the resolve to take things as they came and to stick things out—to stick them out to the bitter end.

Little did I know that my prayer was being answered!

For another six months, life went on, and things were a little better, but basically my life felt like a slow and cumbersome process that wasn't working out as I wished it would.

Then suddenly one morning while I was reading from the Scriptures, the answer to my prayer at last came to light. A passage from Romans talked about the importance of waiting with hope and confidence.

> In hope we already have salvation; in hope not visibly present, or we should not be hoping—nobody goes on hoping for something which they can already see. But having this hope for what we cannot yet see, we are able to wait for it with persevering confidence (Romans 8.24–25).

It was as if the letters on the page became three dimensional. The words resonated in me and I realized clearly that God was answering my prayer of six months ago.

As a result of this experience I learned how to wait with hope in times of adversity. Here are 8 steps to take.

1. Pray

Pray to God in your need, from your real situation in the here and now. Use whatever seems to work best at the time; scripture, prayer books, prayer directly from the heart or even silence are all good.

2. Trust

Be confident that God will hear and answer your prayer. You may not be able to get a clear and direct answer immediately, or it may only be a partial answer at first, but continue to trust in that loving God who loves *you*.

3. Care

Be good to yourself during rough times. Do something you enjoy, eat well, get enough rest and exercise and work steadily at trying to improve the adverse situation.

4. Share

Talk to others about your difficulties, get the insight and wisdom of others who are or have been in your situation. Twelve-step groups are excellent for this; psychologists or other professionals work nicely too.

5. Dare

Dare to make a difference in the lives of others. It may not make the problems go away, but it may help to ease the burden of any loads you may be carrying in addition to helping someone else through a difficult time.

6. Persevere

Remembering that "Rome was not built in a day." Continue with your life as well as you can. Remember that God does not always answer prayers immediately or even the way we would like them answered. But the human spirit is incredibly resilient, able to withstand much more than we think it can. Continue to wait "with persevering confidence," trusting in God, others and yourself.

7. Thank

Be grateful to God for your many blessings, both now and in the past—even if things do not seem to be working out as you would like them. "Counting your blessings" can make a person grateful for what they do have and help them to realize that things may not be as bad as they seem.

8. Remember

Remind yourself that our loving God is always with us, through the good times and even the not-so-good times. Divine Providence will see us through our times of adversity, guiding us in the ways we should go, working with and through us for not only our own greater good, but also for the greater good of humanity, our world and even the universe.

Global Image—Global Space

PAQUI NELSON

For this writer, we are each other's landscapes. And we can make that landscape a beautiful setting for human lives—or a desolate wasteland.

As we move around in the space of our homes, our neighborhood streets, our towns and cities, we become part of someone else's landscape for a minute, an hour, a day.

For the child looking up from the crib, its mother's face becomes part of its landscape; for the customer hurrying through the line at a supermarket, the cashier becomes part of his or her landscape; for two people stopped at a red light, framed by their cars, glancing momentarily at each other and sharing for a minute that particular spot on the globe, a configuration and a minute never to be repeated again, each is part of the other's landscape.

What is the reason for this coming and going of human beings and faces that criss-cross each other daily, sometimes consciously—as when two lovers look into each other's eyes; sometimes unconsciously—as when urban crowds rub shoulders with each other in packed subways and stare straight ahead; yet at other times grotesquely—as when soldiers can no longer look at each other because they feel dehumanized by gas masks?

I sometimes ask myself: why am I standing at the corner of 5th and Main streets at a particular time on a particular day? I know my conscious reason for being there, but what about the unknown reason? Have you ever experienced that odd sense of synchronicity that comes when a blind person crosses your path and your mood swings from self-preoccupation or depression to compassion and a desire to help others? Maybe a grandmother far from her family is transformed for a moment by the sight of children licking ice cream cones on her sidewalk. These seemingly disconnected, seemingly meaningless encounters may be—moment by moment—the choreography of a divine dance so full of mystery we can hardly even begin to fathom the meaning.

As we weave in and out of each other's landscapes, crossing paths with hundreds of people we shall never see again, sharing a moment of time

Dr. Paqui Nelson, a writer and teacher, resides in Palo Alto, CA.

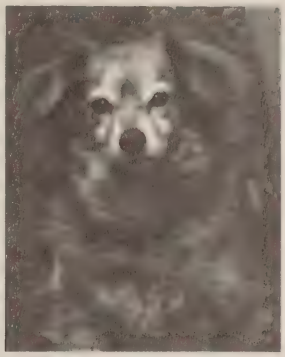
Cliff Moore

and space, we are entrusted with the awe-filled choice of making each other's landscapes masterpieces or abominations. We wield the power of a smile or a scowl, an elegant stride or a dragging shuffle, a courteous gesture of waving a pedestrian by or pushing the pedal to the floor.

How do you look in this global landscape?

Ask Angela

BARBARA ACKERMAN



Do you have a question of the heart or spirit that needs attention? Angela, our canine sage-in-residence, would love to help. Please write to her in care of FiP, 291 Witherspoon St., Princeton, NJ 08542, and she will give you her answer in our next issue.

Dear Angela,

Could you please speak to us about courage and how we can get more of it? Thank you.

Sincerely,
A. Fraidy-Cat

Dear Fraidy-Cat,

Thank you for your question. Often we associate courage with danger like tightrope-walking, sky-diving, or going to war. Of course, we know these activities require courage. But everyday life requires courage from all of us. In this column, I will be speaking not only to sky-divers but even more to those of you who have never climbed a mountain or jumped from a plane. Let's celebrate the quiet heroes and heroines of everyday.

It may take courage to say you're sorry or to admit you've goofed. It may require courage to protect yourself from bullies, and to accept your own fleas and flaws as well as the fleas and flaws of another. For some of us, we may require courage to tell the truth or take care of another soul. Illness, whether it's our own or a beloved's, often requires courage.

For some, like me, it may require courage to give our hearts away to another. When I first met Barbara, I spent our entire introduction un-

derneath the living room couch with just the black tip of my nose sticking out. Eventually I gathered enough courage to squiggle my whole self out. I'm sure glad I did. Courage gave me my very best buddy. Not only does loving another take courage, but it can also take courage to go on without the one we've grown to love. Yes, being alone takes guts. It's a big house out there and someone's gotta guard it. Without my comrade Captain, this task has fallen on my paws. Those big trucks out there are murder on my aging nerve endings, not to mention all that paper that gets slipped through the slot in the front door. I know from first-hand experience that tremendous courage is asked of us when the bodies we're in begin to demand more time and attention. For me, there are days when my back legs are so sore and stiff I am unable to circle my sacred space an adequate number of times. It takes courage to go without this soothing sacred ritual. How do I get through? I use the Angela work-out plan for increasing courage on a regular basis.

The first step of the plan is to name your scaries. Take time to name your own. Here are mine: I shake at the sound of thunder. I quake at the sound of firecrackers. I whimper when I hear water running in the tub. I cower when toddlers toddle toward me. I do not win the good-soldier award for trips I take *in* the car. I do not win the Purple Heart for trips I take *to* the car, for that matter. I run for cover when I see the vacuum cleaner, and I howl mournfully when I discover my blanket gone. Have you made your own list of scaries? Good, you are at step one of the Angela method. Upon completion of all the steps, I can assure you that you will feel more courageous than you did before.

The Angela Work-Out Plan for Increasing Courage:

(1) Face your scaries.
(2) Recognize how you feel when you're scared. Grow used to it. Don't plan on doing anything really courageous without it.
(3) Once a week, do one thing for yourself or another that you genuinely consider courageous. Add to this number when you can.
(4) Get good-quality nap time. It's hard feeling brave when you're sleepy.
(5) Engage in some playful mischief.
(6) Get in decent physical shape. Chase a good sniff.
(7) Putter to the kitchen for frequent dainty noshes. Courage does not grow in an empty stomach.

Tom Dunham

(8) Practice making courageous faces at yourself in your water dish.
(9) Practice feeling courageous in a small, safe place like on your bed or under a bush.
(10) Practice barking bravely at a blank wall or front door several times a day for a few minutes. Bark with great feeling and let yourself swell with pride and bravado.
(11) Return to your blanket for comfort and consolation.
(12) While there, stretch out luxuriously in all directions and soak up all that space you take.
(13) When you have been genuinely courageous, give yourself your own personal hero's or heroine's welcome.
(14) Accept certain things. Not every day will be suitable for courage. There are days when we are meant to remain safely tucked away. Learn to recognize such a day.
(15) Allow yourself some missed opportunities for courage and forgive yourself when you could have or might have been courageous, but were not.
(16) Choreograph your own personal little chicken-dance. Dance it for courage. For this, you will need long toenails and a hard-

wood floor. The courage-building quality of this dance is not only in the movement. Scientific studies have shown that the sound of a thousand dog toenails on a hard-wood floor increases courage. In this dance, you will need to tippy-tap and clippy-clap a good deal for best results. I rely heavily on back-leg work with a lot of tippy-tapping clicking and clacking, all the while going absolutely nowhere except sometimes propelling myself backwards. Know that it is a sacred dance and therefore useful to you.

And that is the entire Angela Work-Out Plan for Increasing Courage. Before the method, I was scared of my own shadow, but no longer—at least not on cloudy days.

I wish all of you as much success with this plan as I have had myself—yes, even more.

Faithfully,
Angela

The Human Quest

SWAMI DAYANANDA SARASWATI

A world-famous Hindu writer and spiritual leader explains four "universal ends" that every human being seeks.

SECURITY AND PLEASURE

Whatever gives you any kind of *security*—emotional, economic, or social—is called *artha* in Sanskrit. Security may be in the form of money, relationships, a home, recognition, influence, or power of any kind. Such accomplishments boost one's ego and therefore provide some ego security. Although people seek various forms of security at different times, the search for security is common to everyone.

Another pursuit, seeking *pleasure*, is called *kama* in Sanskrit. Anything that satisfies your senses, pleases your mind, touches your heart, and evokes in you a certain appreciation, is *kama*. Any form of pleasure you derive from your home or a relationship, for example is *kama*. Music and travel are also *kama*, not *artha*, because by pursuing them you are seeking pleasure, not security. You do not go to Hawaii or the Bahamas to seek security. In fact, you lose some security, in the form of money, when you go to these places.

Pleasure has many forms. For example, sensory pleasures may be anything from ice cream onwards. Intellectual pleasures include playing games, solving puzzles or riddles, and pursuing fields of study. There is another form of pleasure derived from seeing the stars, for example, or enjoying a sunrise, a flower, a beautiful painting, or a child at play. Because this pleasure is neither sensory not intellectual, I will call it aesthetic pleasure. Even though such pleasures go beyond one's senses and intellect, they are still *kama*.

DHARMA AS A HUMAN END

There is a third pursuit, *dharma*, that is neither *artha*, security, nor *kama*, pleasure. In Sanskrit, *dharma* is a word with many meanings. Here, it

Excerpted from the Introduction to the Bhagavadgita, *a course taught by Swami Dayananda. Copyright 1990 Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Box 1059, Saylorsburg, PA.*

refers to a *sense of harmony, the satisfaction derived from altruistic actions such as sharing or helping another person*. The pursuit of *dharma* is different from both *artha* and *kama* because you do not usually help someone in order to gain security or pleasure. When you find someone in need and are able to alleviate his or her discomfort, you feel happy. The joy you experience is not the same as the pleasure you experience by going to Hawaii or to a concert.

A doctor who does not work purely for financial gain enjoys this kind of pleasure. Doing charity work has a similar result. Those who are able to discover joy in such work do so, I would say, because of a certain maturity and understanding on their part.

The satisfaction that comes from one's maturing process is a different type of joy. Not hurting someone, or doing the right thing at the right time, for instance, give you joy—if not now, later. Suppose you have postponed doing something like the laundry, vacuuming, or writing a letter. The day you decide to do it—and do it—you find there is a joy in finally having done it, a joy that is neither pleasure nor security. It is just doing what is to be done, which is *dharma*.

Dharma is a measure of your maturity in that the more mature you are, the more *dharmic* you are. In order to be mature, an understanding of *dharma* and conformity to it become of prime importance in one's life, as we will be seeing throughout the Bhagavadgita. Then, without hurting *dharma*, doing what is to be done, you pursue security and pleasure.

MOKSA: FREEDOM

The *fourth pursuit*, *moksa*, is *freedom or liberation*. *Moksa* is recognized as a pursuit by only a few people in any given generation. Because a certain appreciation, maturity, or insight about life and its struggles is required to understand *moksa*, people do not discerningly pursue it, although everyone is seeking freedom, in fact.

Although we generally think of freedom in a very positive sense, the word *moksa* is defined in a negative sense. There is something binding you, from which you want to become free and that freedom is called *moksa*. For example, *a man in jail has lost his freedom of mobility and wants freedom from imprisonment*. If one is using crutches because of a leg fracture, one wants freedom from the crutches. Similarly, an infant requiring the help of a wall or mother's hand wants to be free of any external support and strives to stand on his or her own.

In the same way, *moksa* means *freedom* from *something I do not want*. That I am attached to particular forms of security reveals a certain fact about myself—that I am insecure and that I want to be free from any sense of insecurity. By going after certain securities, I am not really seeking the securities themselves. I am seeking freedom from being insecure.

Moksa—freedom or liberation—is recognized as a pursuit by only a few people in any given generation. Because a certain appreciation, maturity, or insight about life and its struggles is required to understand *moksa*, people do not discerningly pursue it.

Similarly, that I seek pleasures reveals that I am restless and dissatisfied with myself. I have to do something in order to find pleasure, which means I want to be free from a sense of dissatisfaction with myself. If I am always seeking security and pleasure, when will I be able to say, "I have made it!" Only when I see myself as a secure and pleased person. When I no longer feel the need to seek security and pleasure, then I can say that I am free.

When we look into our various pursuits—security, pleasure, and even *dharma*—we find that what we really seek is none of these. Ultimately speaking, everyone is seeking only *moksa* because freedom from lack of any kind is what we seek in all our pursuits.

Moksa does not mean salvation. In fact, there is no word in Sanskrit for salvation, which is just as well, since salvation implies a certain condemnation. It implies that someone has to salvage or save you, which is not what is meant by *moksa*. The word *moksa* refers only to the freeing of myself from the notions "I am insecure" and "I am displeased with myself." To be free means I must see myself as secure and be pleased with myself as I am. Only then do I have freedom. If I am secure and pleased with myself, all other pursuits become secondary because I require no security or situational change whatsoever to be secure and at peace with myself and the situation in which I find myself.

DISCERNING THE PROBLEM

If you must pursue security to be secure or pursue pleasure to be at home with yourself, your pursuits will be endless. You will spend your entire life manipulating the world in order to please yourself. In the process,

Tom Dunham

you will find that two hands and two legs, five senses, and a mind are not enough to contend with all the factors involved. Your mother has to be pleased and your mother-in-law can never be pleased! There are just too many events and situations, as well as natural forces, over which you seem to have no control.

With your limited powers and limited knowledge, you find that you can never measure up to the demands of gaining the securities and pleasures that you seek. This is why life seems to be a problem. Only when you reach thirty-nine or forty and undergo a "midlife crisis," do you begin to understand this. Even though you may think your marriage or job is your crisis, you are the crisis, in fact. Your crisis has nothing to do with marriage or any other situation in your life.

Seeking security and pleasure is very natural. For a person who has not analyzed his or her pursuits, security and pleasure are always taken to be outside oneself. That "I am insecure," for example, is a totally accepted conclusion, a conclusion that is never doubted or questioned.

As a child, my security depended on the constant protection, love, and

care of my parents. Now that I'm grown up, my parents' security is dependent on me, whereas my security lies elsewhere. Therefore, as a child I was insecure and now also I am insecure. There is a constant shift in what I take to be security. This is common to everyone. No one, however, deserves to have this problem. Security or pleasure is not the problem. That I lack something is not the problem. The problem is that I lack.

The things I lack always change: I lack a degree; I lack money; I lack child; I lack grandchildren. Whatever one lacks is always peculiar to the person at a given time and place, and lacks differ from person to person and from culture to culture. However, "that I lack" is common to everyone.

There are a lot of things I lack. I may lack a healthy body, a taller body, a thinner body, a turned-up nose, longer eyelashes, or a different skin color. And this may be the beginning of an endless list. The more you try to gain what you lack, the more you find you lack. It is like going to the store to pick up a few things you need and coming home with a few more desires to be fulfilled next week. This is why we say desire is like fire. No matter how much you feed it, fire never says, "Enough!" Similarly, I can never say "Enough!" to securities and pleasures because there will always be something else I lack.

Even if a particular pleasure is fulfilled, it is not going to be lasting. Consider music, for instance. You buy a recording of a hit song. Why is this song a hit? Because like a hit man, it knocks the other songs out of the running. Last month's hit song has been a hit and is no longer a hit song. It only gathers dust on your shelf. What made you happy before no longer provides the same joy. You get tired of everything. Even if God were around you all the time, you would eventually get bored with God. This constant changing is natural because you are basically displeased with yourself.

If you close the doors, leave the world behind, and sit in an easy chair, you will understand whether or not you are pleased with yourself. You will find that you do not require a world of objects, a world of books or whatever, to be displeased. All you require is yourself. After just a few minutes of sitting with yourself, you want to get up and turn on the radio, or do something.

To be displeased, then, requires nothing but yourself. It is not the world that displeases you; you are displeased with yourself. And because

Tom Dunham

any security or pleasure is limited by nature—in terms of time, place, and content—the one who is displeased remains in spite of occasional moments of pleasure.

When, then, are you going to completely fulfill your desires for security and pleasure? I am not saying you should not seek security; that is not the point here. We are only trying to understand the nature of our pursuits. Money, for example, definitely has its value. But, if you think that there is security in money, or in anything else, the process of seeking becomes endless.

The insecure I, the one who wants to be secure, does not really become secure by the addition of something I consider to be secure. For example, as long as I require crutches, the sense of insecurity will remain with me. Feeling secure because I have crutches does not mean I become secure. I have a false sense of security because of the crutches, but the sense of insecurity centered on me remains.

Suppose I am insecure and what I think is secure is as insecure as I am. When one insecure person marries another insecure person in order to be secure, the result is not security. All that results is a marriage between two insecure people. Insecurity plus insecurity does not make security, it only makes double insecurity. Therefore, an insecure I plus anything in this world is not going to make me secure.

THE VISION OF VEDANTA

We have now discerned the problem to be, "I am displeased with myself," a fact that is not going to be altered just because I pick up moments of security or pleasure. That I am insecure or unhappy does not change merely because I acquire certain securities. The only solution is to see myself as already secure and acceptable.

If, with all these securities and pleasures, I am displeased with myself, how am I going to see myself pleased? This is where the teaching called Vedanta comes in and tells you that your problem is not one of lacking something, but of not knowing that you do not lack anything. It converts all one's pursuits into a pursuit of knowledge, or *moksa*.

In the vision of Vedanta, there is no reason for you to be displeased with yourself because you are totally acceptable to yourself—not by attitude, but by fact. It is not a belief; it is a fact, a discoverable fact. Only something that can be discovered is a fact and the discoverable fact here is that you lack nothing. You are totally free. The only problem is that you think you lack and the solution is to see that you do not lack. Therefore, the problem is you and the solution is also you. This is the vision of Vedanta.

OPEN MIND, OPEN HEART: THE CONTEMPLATIVE DIMENSION OF THE GOSPEL

by Thomas Keating, Amity House, Inc. Warwick/New York, 1986, 137 pages, paperback, $8.95.

This book by Father Keating, a Cistercian priest and monk and the founder of the Centering Prayer movement, is designed to initiate the reader into a deep, living relationship with God. Written by an acknowledged modern spiritual master, the book offers step-by-step guidance in the method of centering prayer, the first rung on the ladder of contemplative prayer. Contemplative prayer is described by the author as "a process of interior transformation"; a conversation initiated by God and leading, if we consent, to divine union. One's way of seeing reality changes in the process. A restructuring of consciousness takes place which empowers us to perceive, relate and respond with increasing sensitivity to the divine presence in, through, and beyond everything that exists. Anyone interested in prayer, meditation and spirituality will find this book richly rewarding. *PW*

LIVING AT THE HEART OF CREATION: PRACTICAL WISDOM FOR EXTRAORDINARY TIMES

by Michael Exeter, Foundation House Publications, Loveland, Colorado, 1991, 136 pages, paperback, $9.95.

Michael Exeter, the Eighth Marquess of Exeter and the author of *My World, My Responsibility*, offers heart-warming reflections on the great challenges confronting our planet today. "Our responsibility is to live with dignity," he writes, which means moving out of fear and shame, complaint and criticism, into "the clear air of spirit," where stillness and peace prevail. In chapters like "Soaring With Our Own Wings," "Welcoming a New Order," "The Birth of Light" and others, Exeter takes a very grounded approach to a very lofty spirituality—passed on to him by his "spiritual mentor," Martin Exeter, his father.

Gentle, caring, and deeply spiritual, this book reflects the West's current efforts to recover eternal values—truth, love, kindness, goodness, "usefulness to the Great Spirit." *MFG*

We welcome your comments. Please send them to The Editor, FiP, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542.

This is how I used to pray (kneeling by my bed): God bless Mommy, Daddy, my brothers, my nanny, all my kind friends. I thank you for my happy day. Take me when I die to heaven, happy there with Thee to dwell. Amen.

This is how I pray now (sitting comfortably in bed): I read an article in *Fellowship in Prayer*. I think about it. I meditate on it, and I pray about it. I let God speak to me through that article.

Thank you and thank all your contributors and staff.

Antoinette Galbraith; Edinburgh, Scotland

We continue to be the recipients of a gift subscription to *Fellowship in Prayer*. We read the articles when we recite our prayers in common—three times a day. *FiP* is also used here for private meditation, and how we love Angela! She truly personifies wisdom, and she makes one smile, too. Please know how much we appreciate our subscription to *Fellowship in Prayer*.

S. Rachel Salute; Carmelite Monastery, Indianapolis, IN

"Ask Angela" is *wonderful*!!

Ed Crofts; Southampton, PA

I am a missionary from the US to the Dominican Republic, a Spanish-speaking country. I work in the mountains with children. The people are very, very poor, and there are many children who die daily from a lack of milk and because of the impure water. But the faith of these people is strong and they openly welcome our efforts to teach them the message of the scriptures. One of my sisters from the US who is now the Mother General of our order sent me a copy of *FiP*, and now our community often quotes to them from your articles. Continue your good work and know of my prayers.

S. Rose Ann; Prov. San Cristobel, Dominican Republic

Your fellowship is a wonderful, much needed service. A network of Light and Love reminding us there is: *One World, One God, One Humanity*.

Mrs. Fred Perry; Lynchburg, VA

I read *FiP* as soon as it arrives—usually from back to front—and it *always* speaks to me. Frequently it addresses a current concern in an almost mind-reading (soul-reading!), way. Pauline Semkow's article, "Prayer to the God of the Whatever," is an example. Thank you for the book reviews, "Ask Angela," the "Rock Rituals," and "A Rabbi's Prayer," which was in your February edition and was especially insightful. God bless you and your ministry.

Margaret O'Connell; Bronxville, NY

I find *Fellowship in Prayer* to be a most important part of my spiritual life and regret very much that I was unable to meet your representatives in March when they were in California.

We are living in an exciting moment in God's creative process. There is a significant integration of scientific disciplines going on, and I have been privileged to take part in some aspects. The miracle of creation and our engagement in the dynamic of life forces is no longer a matter of ancient wisdom, but a current actuality that brings the mystery of God into the present moment. More and more individuals are becoming aware of God's immanence in life's processes, and this brings a sense of illumination that can be of inspiration to others. I believe we are revising our understanding of God and of the lawfulness that governs the complex process of life with which each of us is blessed. I hope *FiP* will continue to be a window on these momentous changes.

I am most enthusiastic about your active and effective role in implementing communication among your readers [in your Interfaith Network], and in starting small groups where interpersonal engagement can bring to the immediate moment truths that amplify life and living.

God's blessings on your vision and enterprise.

Louis W. Sander, M.D.; St. Helena, CA

Thank you for publishing such an enlightening and inspiring journal.

Patricia Montesano; Colorado Springs, CO

I support *FiP* wholeheartedly. It is excellent, creative, often humorous, and always broadly ecumenical. Bless you all!

William Somody; Cuyahoga Falls, OH

I am very happy that there is a magazine such as yours.

Rhey Velmonte

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER, INC.

291 Witherspoon Street
Princeton, New Jersey 08542

(609) 924-6863

IN MEMORIAM

Carl Allison Evans (1880-1956)
Founder
Paul Griffith (1921-1983)
Editor

TRUSTEES

Kathryn G. Brown
President Emeritus, Co-founder
Paul Walsh
President, Executive Secretary
Samuel M. Silver
Vice-President
Howard S. Ende
Treasurer
Arthur Caliandro
James T.C. Liu
Frederick J. Olessi
Corporate Secretary
Joseph C. Williamson

ADVISORS

Marjorie Bankson
Barrett Eagle Bear
Thomas Berry
Mother Tessa Bielecki
Harvey Cox
Joseph Glaser
Joan Halifax
Sheila Holtgrieve
Thich Nhat Hanh
Ram Kolluri
Werner Mark Linz
Daniel Martin
James Parks Morton
Christian Murck

EDITOR

Mary Ford-Grabowsky

For six bimonthly issues of *Fellowship in Prayer*, send $16 to Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542. Free subscriptions are available for those unable to pay.

We welcome articles on prayer, meditation, spiritual experience, religious faith or practices, and similar topics. Preference is given to experiential manuscripts. Manuscripts should not exceed 1500 words, should be typed, double spaced, either on 8½ by 11 inch paper or on a 5¼ inch floppy minidisk, 2S/2D, in WordPerfect and sent to The Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542. Please include a biography of no more than five lines.

© Copyright 1992 by Fellowship in Prayer.

Material in this publication is copyrighted and may not be reproduced by photocopy or any other means without written permission.

This book is printed on acid-free recycled paper.

FELLOWSHIP IN
PRAYER

291 Witherspoon Street
Princeton, New Jersey 08542

Non-Profit Org.
U.S.Postage Paid
Princeton, NJ
Permit No. 415

Address Correction Requested

"For a World United in Prayer"